For Immediate Release
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Contact: Morton County Sheriff's Department – 701.426.1587

Unlawful activities continue at Dakota Access Pipeline construction site

Mandan, ND - Around 10:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, a group of 150 to 200 protestors illegally assembled near County Road 135, two miles east of Highway 1806 at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction area on private property. Two protestors were secured to heavy equipment with an apparatus similar to a recent protest.

Approximately 25 law enforcement officers responded to the protest and observed horses, protestors with facial masks, protestors carrying hatchets and knives, and some were wearing goggles.

No Dakota Access Pipeline construction personnel were working at this site.

No arrests have been made at this time.

"Officers pulled back from the area because they determined it was unsafe to respond. The situation currently involved destruction of property. At this point we believe it does not warrant physical involvement. Our primary goal from day one has been public safety and that includes the safety of our officers," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier.

Law enforcement is investigating a report of a drone flying above the crowd. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, drones cannot operate over a crowd in an unprotected manner. Officers also witnessed the drone flying above 400 feet which is also an FAA violation and the drone interfered with a state aircraft.

There have been many instances of non-peaceful, unlawful actions toward law enforcement officers and workers. Law enforcement officers have witnessed hundreds of criminal acts, including: assaults, trespassing on private property, obstructing government functions, preventing arrest, disorderly contact, and vandalism.

Al Dohrmann, Director of the ND Department of Emergency Services, who has lead a delegation in negotiations with tribal leaders, said, "It's disappointing to me that unlawful acts continue even though we have been working towards a peaceful end to the protest."

"Because of the continued pedestrian traffic on and along the roadway, the traffic control point on Highway 1806 will remain in place. This was put into place for the protection of those pedestrians on the roadway and motorists traveling through the area," said Col. Mike Gerhart, Superintendent, ND Highway Patrol.

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